

March 6, 2023

Chair Gelser Blouin, Members of the Committee,

My name is Dahnes Medora, I am the Chief Impact Officer at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. I am here today in support of Senate Bill 606. Over the last several months I've served as part of the coalition that built this concept to provide much needed support for the significant role the nonprofit sector plays meeting critical needs for Oregonians.

The work of United Way is to advance equity by mobilizing, responding, and investing with our community partners to improve and strengthen lives. We work nimbly to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. At times that means creating supports for tenants and landlords to prevent evictions, it means serving as the backbone to two early learning hubs, and it means being able to rapidly deploy resources in times of emergency and crisis.

This work is all done in partnership with local and state government, and smaller community-based and culturally-specific organizations. Senate Bill 606 provides the necessary support to allow nonprofits to continue doing this work. On average, Oregon's nonprofit workforce is paid 20% less than is needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment. As a result, the nonprofit sector's turnover rate is approaching 20% for full-time staff, and 36% for part-time staff. When your work is to build community partnerships, it is relationship-based. Losing staff means having to start over building trust with partners.

SB 606 would create a Workforce Retention Fund to help nonprofits that partner with government agencies retain employees. This is critical not only for organizations like United Way, but for the smaller nonprofits on which we rely. This tool to stabilize our workforce is a timely lifeline to the nonprofit sector as Oregon's state agencies increasingly rely on the community-driven work of nonprofit organizations to ensure equitable distribution of funds and delivery of programming.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, I urge your support of SB 606.



Dahnes R. Medora  
Chief Impact Officer  
United Way of the Columbia Willamette